



MEETING SUMMARY
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION (WRAC)
Upper East Coast (UEC) Water Supply Plan Update
Indian River Community College (IRCC)
Wolf High Technology Center,
Chastain Campus, 2400 S.E. Salerno Road, Stuart, FL
Monday, December 12, 2005
9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

WRAC Members:

Tom Bausch, Commissioner, Town of Sewall's Point (WRAC Alternate for Patrick Hayes)
Doug Bournique, Indian River Citrus League

Attendees:

Jim Brawner, Juno Beach, FL
Richard C. Dent, Loxahatchee River Water Control District, Jupiter, FL
Dick Dominguez, Arcadis
Philip "Flip" Gates, Ft. Pierce, FL
Charles Hann, Vero Beach, FL
Irene Kennedy Quincy, Attorney
Steve Lamb, MacVicar, Frederico and Lamb, Consultants, West Palm Beach, FL
Richard M. Schoemborn, City of Port St. Lucie
Peter Merritt, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
Anne Murray
Dave Peters, City of Stuart, Stuart, FL
Jason Pugsley, CDM Engineering
Vince Riccobono, SMRU, Hobe Sound, FL
Donna Smith, USDA, Ft. Pierce, FL
Richard Stenberg, Ft. Pierce Utility Authority, Ft. Pierce, FL
Bob Ulevich, St. Johns Water Control District, Vero Beach, FL

Staff:

Mark Elsner, Dir., Implementation Div., Water Supply Dept.
Linda Hoppes, UEC Plan Manager, WSP Dept.
Jim Jackson, Sr. Supervising Planner, Water Supply Dept.
Kathy LaMartina, Martin/St. Lucie Service Center
Gardenia Long, Martin/St. Lucie Service Center
Dawn Rose, Water Supply Dept.
Rick Smith, WRAC Facilitator
Karen Smith, Director, Martin/St. Lucie Service Center

1. Welcome and Introductions by Lennart Lindahl, Governing Board Member

The meeting was called to order at 9:45 a.m. Mr. Lindahl welcomed the participants and asked everyone to introduce themselves and the organizations represented.

The purpose of this meeting is to continue to update the Upper East Coast Water Supply Plan by July, 2006, pursuant to Florida Senate Bill 444, which merges Local Government Comprehensive Planning requirements and Water Supply needs.

The act provides certainty that water supply needs will be met as local governments implement their comprehensive plans.

This meeting focuses on alternative water supply solutions. Over the past several decades, growth on the Treasure Coast has not been as explosive as in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, but it is getting there. Projections are that the population here will reach 500,000 by year 2020, so our obligation is to forecast the growth and water supply demands as best we can. Upper East Coast utilities have begun work on forecasting alternatives to meet needs from 2007-2025.

The SFWMD has kept open the door for new alternative water supply projects and is encouraging utilities that have not yet responded to work on new project concepts. It is better to get projects in now rather than try to add them later. There are incentives in SB 444 to encourage that.

Karen Smith, Martin and the St. Lucie Service Center staff have met with all of the utilities in the UEC and they are available to continue to meet on these projects.

Mr. Lindahl turned the meeting over to Mark Elsner, Director, Implementation Div., Water Supply Dept.

2. Initial Alternative Water Supply Projects – FY 2006, Mark Elsner:

Introduced Linda Hoppes as the new Plan Manager for the Upper East Coast.

Ms. Hoppes made a presentation on this issue (see handout). Funding has substantially increased. Intent is to spend the funds and complete projects quickly. Intent is to complete projects and make new water available. UEC projects funded will bring about 15 million gallons daily (mgd) from reclaimed water and about 12 mgd from reverse osmosis.

Q Port St. Lucie has additional projects that would fit the Alternative Water Supply criteria. Should they be submitted now?

A Will discuss in next presentation.

Q Is documentation the same as last year?

A It is a bit different and we'll get to that. Use the one page questionnaire on our website.

Mark Elsner: Senate Bill 444 tied Alternative Water Supply program to the Water Supply Plans required of each water management district.

3. Status of Proposed Future Water Supply Projects – Fiscal Years 2007-2025:
Linda Hoppes.

Ms. Hoppes gave a presentation – see handout. One of primary purposes of SB 444 is to prevent harm to the natural system by moving water sources for human use from groundwater to alternative water supplies. She directed participants to the SFWMD.GOV links to the Alternative Water Supply questionnaire and other information regarding the program.

Questions:

Q Tom Bausch: The legislation intended to avoid impacts to natural systems – what happens if we don't avoid those impacts?

A Mr. Elsner: The projects are intended to avoid the impacts.

Q Nobody is here to speak for the natural systems.

A The Consumptive Use Permitting process looks at water use and impacts on natural systems.

Q What about use of ASR in this regard?

Rick Smith commented that for the first time, the bill also provides for a strong link between alternative water supply projects and local government comprehensive plans.

Karen Smith asked staff to explain in more detail the local government review process for the water supply plans.

A Linda Hoppes responded that the SFWMD will be providing in the water supply plan update, a process for reviewing the plan information. There will be two Appendices which will include all the information the local governments need in one place; including: population projections, projected water demands, planned projects, water facility plans and comprehensive plans.

Jim Jackson: The process also provides certainty for future growth. Certified letters will be sent to each local government manager of alternative water supply projects. Local governments will have 12 months to either agree or propose additional alternatives.

Q Will local governments adopt a comprehensive plan element that has the projects in it?

A They will have to amend plans by including a 10-year water facilities element and will identify how they plan to meet future water supply demands. The Florida Department of Community Affairs is requiring the first five years to allocate funding. Second five years can be "soft" money. Municipal utilities will not have many problems with this approach. Counties that have utilities providing services in unincorporated areas (private and public) are likely to have more problems.

Q So the local governments don't need to adopt the SFWMD Water Supply Plan in the Local Government Comprehensive Plan, but for those projects the local government is directly responsible for, the comprehensive plan amendments will list those projects. That will all be triggered by the SFWMD water supply plan and the dates set forth in the legislation and the plans.

Q When are the SFWMD water supply plans to be in place?

A July, 2006.

Comment: That is very little time.

A It represents a compromise made during discussion of the bill in Tallahassee. The DCA website has information about recent workshops with local governments on these subjects. Pursuant to SB 444, the water supply plans must specify what sources will be used to supply water to meet the future demands. SFWMD preference is to have local governments state what those sources and projects are.

Q Irene Quincy: Where does the permitting process fit into all of this? If utilities and local governments are working together to implement alternative water supply projects within say five years, will it be assumed they'll get a permit?

A The "Circles of Processes" (local government comprehensive plans and water supply plans) are coming closer together.

Q Are SFWMD planners looking at the permitting process to see if a project will meet the permitting requirements?

A Now, the focus is on funding appropriate projects, however at this point there is no guarantee of annual funding.

Q Comprehensive Plan Process: Done thru planning process. Utilities are here, but not the planners.

A Right, the water management district planners are in contact with the local government planning departments. The legislation intended to force more communication between planning depts. and utilities. If anyone has contacts for planning departments, please let us know.

We'll send out DCA links. Henry Bittaker is the person on SFWMD staff most knowledgeable about the planning linkages.

Q Is the "10 page document" going to be part of the water supply plans?

A No. There will be analyses and we'll come up with a list.

Q Bob: St. Johns Water Control District (WCD) is prepared to provide more detail on agricultural water needs.

Comment: At future meeting, need to get update on that.

Q Bob: We have a major agriculture water project – will it impact the Consumptive Use Permitting Process?

A That project may be a little different than what the alternative water supply program is for – meeting regional water supply demands. But this project needs to be captured in the update. Write up the study and see where it is, etc.

Q Is there a checklist SFWMD is using to evaluate projects?

A Yes. It is on the website. 9 factors from SB 444, and the Governing Board added more.

Jim Jackson: 2 parts. One incorporates water supply plan and local government comprehensive plan linkages and the other is alternative water supply projects to be funded on annual basis.

Q How many utilities did not respond?

A Guessing 50 district-wide. Water Supply department is doing analysis so we don't double count water, etc.

Q Irene Quincey: If small local government does not anticipate high growth would it still need to go through all the plan analysis or can they assume Consumptive Use Permits will be renewed?

A No, that cannot be assumed. The SB 444 requirements touch everyone.

Q Doug Bournique: Need to find as much money as possible to acquire more land because price continues to escalate. But it is going quickly to developers. Every day, the developers are knocking on every landowner's door trying to tie up as much as possible. Need to get aggressive: do leasebacks, etc.

Tom Bausch: SFWMD doing its best; but not getting a dime out of Washington, D.C. for CERP. Everyone has responsibility. E-mail Bill Firth in Congress.

4. Discussion: Additional Potential Projects - Mark Elsner

Now is time to get projects in. Will brief WRAC in January about list of projects and then the SFWMD Governing Board in February. Will include list of projects and status of water supply plan updates.

Q Rick Dent – When will the application deadline be for next FY funding cycle?

A It will be similar to process last year. Drafts would be due in February with April deadline. But working on parallel track for planning process and alternative water supply project funding. We'll have workshops as done in past. Much information will be on sfwmd.gov

Also have our water conservation projects – provide about \$50K per grant. None were funded in the UEC last year.

WRAC/Governing Board briefings meetings will focus on strategies for best use of this funding. May see changes in direction. May move to more funding for larger projects while keeping some presence in smaller projects?

Q: Rick Dent: Some projects won't be able to be completed, so what about worthwhile projects, previously funded in need of future funding for completion?

A Mark: January – WRAC

Next meeting of this group will most likely be held in March 2006.

5. Plan Schedule and Future Workshops: Linda Hoppes.

Recorded By:

Rick Smith
WRAC Facilitator